

Government in America: People, Politics, and Policy  
Thirteenth Edition, and Texas Edition  
Edwards/Wattenberg/Lineberry

Chapter 19  
**Policymaking for Health Care  
and the Environment**

# Health Care Policy

- The Health of Americans
  - Americans generally lag behind other countries in some key health statistics.
    - Lower life expectancy and higher infant mortality rate
- The Cost of Health Care
  - Americans spend more than any other country—\$1.9 trillion and one-seventh of GDP.
  - Reasons for high costs:
    - High-tech medicine
    - Insurance pays for health care.
    - Malpractice lawsuits leads to defensive medicine, which drives up costs.

# Health Care Policy

- Uneven Coverage, Uneven Care
  - Health Insurance
    - 45.8 million Americans have no health insurance.
    - Most common reason for losing health insurance is losing or changing a job
    - Health insurance is closely tied to race and income—higher income means more likely to have insurance
  - Managed Care
    - Health Maintenance Organization (HMO): organization contracted by individuals or insurance companies to provide health care for a yearly fee—limits choice—covers about 60 percent of Americans
    - Designed to reduce costs through oversight and limiting patient choices

# Health Care Policy

- The Role of Government in Health Care
  - Government in the United States plays smaller role than governments in other countries
  - National Health Insurance: a compulsory insurance program for all American that would have the government finance citizens' medical care—not passed
  - Medicare: provides hospitalization insurance for elderly and optional coverage for other medical expenses
  - Medicaid: public assistance program to provide health care for the poor, which is funded by both national and state governments

# Health Care Policy

- Policymaking for Health Care
  - The Politics of Health Care
    - Interest groups play a major role in health care policy making, leading to uneven government and private health care policies.
      - Elderly
      - Businesses
      - Insurance companies

# Health Care Policy

- Policymaking for Health Care
  - Two Presidents, Two Health Care Plans
    - Clinton
      - Guarantee health care coverage for all
      - Paid for by employers who pay a premium into a public fund and tax increases on cigarettes
      - Interest groups lobbied hard against this bureaucratic and complicated plan which died in Congress.
    - Bush
      - Health savings accounts
      - Drug benefits for elderly through Medicare

# Health Care Policy

- Policymaking for Health Care
  - The Health Policy Issues Ahead
    - Nothing suggests health care will become cheaper.
    - Stem cell research
      - Limits on federal funding and research, but states spending more
    - Is medical rationing the solution to high health care costs?

# Environmental Policy

- Environmental Policies in America
  - Environmental Protection Agency:
    - A federal agency created in 1970 and charged with administering all the government's environmental legislation
    - Administers policies dealing with toxic wastes
    - The largest independent regulatory agency



# Environmental Policy

- Environmental Policies in America (cont.)
  - Clean Air
    - Clean Air Act of 1970: charged the Department of Transportation with responsibility to reduce automobile emissions
    - 1990 amendments allowed emissions trading
    - 2004 EPA data show:
      - Lead has been cut to zero
      - Carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide by two-thirds
      - Particulates by nearly three-quarters

# Environmental Policy

- Environmental Policies in America
  - Clean Water
    - Water Pollution Control Act of 1972
      - Intended to clean up the nation's rivers and lakes requiring the use of pollution control technology
      - Has helped reclaim numerous rivers and lakes since its passage
      - But misses “runoff” pollution from city streets and other areas

# Environmental Policy

- Environmental Policies in America
  - Wilderness Preservation
    - The U.S. is a world leader.
    - The national parks and national forests may be restricted to keep them for future generations.
    - George W. Bush proposed letting states decide on roads in wilderness areas.
  - Endangered Species
    - Endangered Species Act: federal government must protect actively endangered species—regardless of economic impact

# Environmental Policy

- Environmental Policies in America
  - Toxic Wastes
    - Superfund: created by Congress in 1980 to clean up hazardous waste sites; money comes from taxing chemical products
    - Has virtually eliminated haphazard dumping of toxic waste, but less successful in cleaning up existing waste
    - Nuclear waste presents a serious challenge—Yucca Flats in Nevada as home for nuclear waste

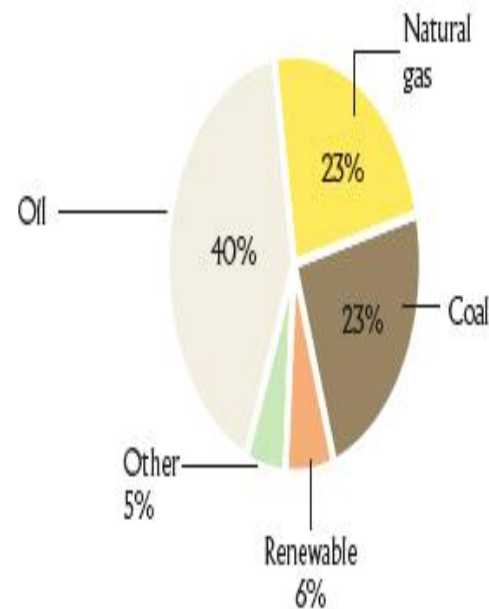
# Energy Policy

**Figure 19.1 Sources of America's Energy**

Despite the technological advances of society, America still relies on traditional sources for its energy: coal, oil, and natural gas. Coal generates a majority of our electricity; oil fuels our cars, trucks, and planes. Only 6 percent of our energy comes from renewable sources, mainly hydroelectricity and geothermal power.

*Note:* "Other" consists mostly of hydroelectricity, wood, and wind.

*Source:* Energy Information Administration, 2005.



# Energy Policy

- Energy Sources and Energy Politics
  - 87% of the nation's energy comes from coal, oil, and natural gas.
  - Coal is the most abundant fuel—90 percent of nation's energy resources—but also the dirtiest.
  - Oil accounts for 40% of our energy, but creates a dependence on foreign (especially Middle East) sources.
  - The most controversial energy source is nuclear.

# Energy Policy

**Table 19.1 Where Is the Oil? Who Consumes It?**

Oil is measured in barrels. The world's reserves of oil are mostly located in OPEC countries (including Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Venezuela). The United States, with only 4 percent of the world's population, consumes just exactly a quarter of the world's annual oil production.

	RESERVES		CONSUMPTION	
	Billion Barrels	Reserve Share	Million Barrels Per Day	Share
United States	22.7	2%	19.8	25%
OPEC	826.1	68%	6.6	8%
Rest of world	364.3	30%	51.8	66%

Source: Department of Energy, Energy Fact Sheet, September 6, 2004.

# Energy Policy

- The Global Warming Gridlock
  - Earth is warming to between two and six degrees by 2100, due to carbon dioxide
  - Total costs could be \$5 trillion.
  - United States is leading producer of carbon dioxide, but has not ratified Kyoto treaty
    - Kyoto requires reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010.
  - States, like California, are reducing emissions.



# Groups, Energy, and the Environment

- Environmental clean up is political since it puts “public” goods against other private concerns.
- Explosion of groups formed to protect the environment in 1960s and 1970s.
- Others oppose strict environmental laws, claiming it may hurt economy.
- Policies will be controversial and expensive.

# Understanding Health Care and Environmental Policy

- Democracy, Health Care, and Environmental Policy
  - The issues involve all levels of governments.
  - High-tech issues limit citizens' participation.
  - Relies heavily on group participation
    - Groups, not individuals, have resources needed to afford the research into the science and policy of the issues.

# Understanding Health Care and Environmental Policy

- The Scope of Government and Health Care and Environmental Policy
  - As citizens want more health care reform, government will grow.
  - Increased environmental protection will also increase the size of government.
  - With party divisions, incremental, not fundamental change is most likely.

# Summary

- Technology is important to health and environmental policies.
  - Advances have improved health care but also increased its cost.
  - Advances have improved quality of life, but reliance on coal and oil as sources of energy have contributed to environmental degradation.
- Government will continue to grow to address these policy issues.